

AN ARMY OF SUB-TROLLS,
A SHAM MAGICIAN AND A WRITHING,
SLITHERING GOD RACE TO SAVE

GIITA

PROVOCATIVE ILLUSTRATED ADULT FANTASY

1994

A WARREN MAGAZINE

No. FOURTEEN

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THE CROP: SENSITIVE VOYAGE; BIGOTED!

I look forward to every new issue of 1994 because I know that with each successive month, Warren Publishing is going to become more and more daring, and strive to open new horizons within the fairly limited confines of the comics medium.

1994 #13 was no disappointment in that respect.

While *Ghita of Allisarr*, "Cyberman" and "The Starfire Saga" were pretty much standard 1994 filler material, both "The Crop" and "Voyage To the Bottom of the Barrel" were groundbreakers of the first order.

"Voyage To the Bottom" explored racial relations from a satiric viewpoint. As the contents page blurb which described it, stated, it probed a delicate subject in a not-so-delicate manner.

While I must admit that I personally didn't care for the story, it deserves merit for daring to speak out candidly on interracial issues. I think the only reason why the story failed with me is because of its biased and bigoted tone. Author *Budd Lewis* obviously has a deep-rooted fear and hatred of Black Americans. The feature would have been much more effective had he taken a less racist stance.

As for "The Crop," the story is without question, my all-time favorite from the Warren magazines. It broached a very real fear of which people all over the world are suddenly becoming aware: the looming probability of global famine.

The story itself was vulgar and shocking. It was also sensitive and understanding at the same time. It vividly and accurately portrayed the life of a slaughter house employee and the common-place bloodletting which has become an integral part of his life.

Author/editor *Will Richardson* deserves his first Warren Award for this emotional tour-de-force. And illustrator *Jose Ortiz* should be commended for his gritty but extremely realistic illustration, which so beautifully evoked the mood of the story.

"The Crop" was a trendsetting instant classic which will be looked upon as a milestone because 1994 brought yet another taboo tumbling down! It was the type of story which keeps bringing me back month after month, to the pages of the incredible 1994!

Ida Perez
Bronx, N.Y.



"THE CROP" SO MUCH FERTILIZER!

"The Crop" was one of the most tasteless and disgusting stories I have ever read anywhere. And for that very reason, I loved it!

The story was obviously designed to shock the reader and make him think. It did just that for me.

What will happen when mankind depletes his limited reserves of beef and other livestock? The speculative theories set forth in "The Crop" offer a very real and very frightening solution to an inevitable problem.

But I sincerely hope I'm not around when essence comes to man's rescue with "salvation" thinly disguised as cannibalism!

STAN HYMEN
Los Angeles, Calif.

OLDER READERS DEMAND MORE!

The one aspect to which I look forward in each new issue of 1994, was missing from issue #13. And that is, at least one lengthy, feature story.

It seems that you've had a feature-length story of eighteen pages or more in every 1994 to date. But unlucky issue number thirteen was loaded down with short eight-to-ten page filler stories. Now that's all fine for *CRUEPY*, *EGGIE* and the other Warren magazines. But not 1994! We older readers need a little more substance to sustain our interests.

I hope such overights won't occur in the future.

ARTHUR PETZ
Townsville, Ky.

We try hard to please, Arthur. For length of story and depth of scope try this issue's 22-page epic, "The Benevolence." It begins on page #17. To make up for our oversight of last issue, 1994 #15 will feature not one but two spectacular epics!

THE SMUT GOES ON!

After thirteen issues of blatant, raving smut, I don't know why, but I continue to pick up Warren's pornographic 1994 magazine. I guess it's because I'm an incurable optimist and truly expect that the childish, petty porn found within each new issue, will eventually evolve into intelligent, speculative fiction.

But again with issue #13, I was destined for disappointment. Besides shameless, needless sex, this "titillating" issue digressed into the pseudo-psychological fantasies of self-flagellation in the story "Imaginary Lover." The *Marvel Comics*-influenced "Cyberman" offered more gore than sex, but who can ever forget those classic panels wherein the brains of the protagonist's lovely wife are splattered all across the page??

And where but in 1994 could we have seen diseased, worm-ridden babies served up for lunch as in "The Crop!" Not to mention grossly phallic monsters slithering up, down and sideways upon the wanton body of the whorish *Ghita of Allisarr*. All-out racial genocide your cup of tea? Then "Voyage To the Bottom of the Barrel" was for you!

Yeah, 1994 #13 offered us a lot. Unfortunately it was just a lot of the usual dumb old shit piled higher and deeper.

CLINTON COLLINS
Northrop, Penn.

CONTROVERSY FUN?

I really don't know about Warren's 1994 magazine. I've followed it since the first issue, but I have mixed feelings. It has tremendous potential, but I see a very small percent of that potential being realized, especially by your writers.

My main complaint, is that I think you're using the "Provocative Illustrated Adult Fantasy" cover logo as an excuse to flash flesh and to flaunt filth. Now I am not so prudish as to believe that there is anything wrong with nudity or obscene slang, but nine times out of ten, there is no reason for them in comic stories. They are not always crucial to telling a good story, and their presence in 1994 usually serves no function other than to provide immature writers, artists, and readers with cheap vicarious thrills.

I don't know. Sometimes I think Warren enjoys being controversial.

KEVIN MCCONNELL
Warren, Penn.

1994's ANNUAL RACIST STATEMENT!

1994 has done it again! It has published it's yearly "Anti-Nigger" story.

Last year it was "The Harvest," that sick, detestable ode to the timely art of nigger hunting! I didn't think anything could ever top that.

But this year's masterwork, "Voyage To The Bottom of the Barrel," certainly does! Author Budd Lewis not only rewrote Darwin's theory of evolution, but he managed to destroy the entire Black population of Earth in a mere fourteen pages.

What does 1994 have on tap for next year? Nigger genocide on an interplanetary scale?

EDSEL ROBINSON
Atlanta, Ga.

I don't know how any man, white or black, could write such hateful, racist trash as "Voyage To The Bottom of the Barrel." But worse, how could any respectable magazine publish such a story without inciting the wrath of its Black readers?

MABEL STYSE
Washington, D.C.

Budd Lewis is a racist bigot who should be shot and put out of his misery. It's sick, hate-mongering freaks like him who have caused the real racial tensions in our society.

CATHY WEINBAUM
Brooklyn, N.Y.

All I can say is, Budd Lewis had better keep his obviously bily-white ass off the streets of my neighborhood. That's one motherfucker who's going to get his face slashed if I ever meet up with him!

COLIN WILSON
Oakland, Calif.

MRS. NINO'S PRIDE AND JOY

I noticed that the story "Cyberman" in 1994 #13 was illustrated by Delando Nino. I've seen Delando's work in previous issues of 1994 and in other Warren magazines. But this is the first time I've seen the artist use his last name. Is he any relation to your other great artist, Alex Nino?

LYLE HAGAMAN
Fallbrook, Calif.

Marvel Comics may have the Buscema brothers and the Romita family. But Warren Publishing has attained artistic one-upmanship with the Nino mob.

MARIA LATANIOTIS
Lantau, Wisc.

Alex and Delando are Mrs. Nino's pride and joy. They're also the most talented brothers ever to wield a brush for comics!



TRIBUTE TO AN UNSUNG HERO!

Everybody's always saying nice things about the artists and writers and even the editors of the Warren magazines. Isn't it about time, though, that somebody said something nice about that real unsung hero behind Jim Warren's beautiful comics? I'm talking about Jim Warren himself, publisher extraordinaire.

Think what life would be like if there were no Warren magazines whatsoever. There'd be no horror, like that found in *CHUCKY* and *KEEKE* magazines. There'd be no unique adventure characters like *Vampirella* and *The Book*. And there'd be no "sex, sin and rampant immorality," the like of which can only be found within the pages of 1994.

Without Jim Warren, offering a viable comics alternative as he does, we would have only the mundane, repetitious and shoddy comics published under the *Marvel* and *National* house labels. And how utterly and truly boring that would be!

Yet, not only does Jim Warren provide his American public with good alternative comics, he also gives those few brilliant and talented artists and writers who have refused to sell out to mindless commercialism a place to showcase their talents while earning what is, not doubt, a comfortable living.

Jim Warren should be lauded and canonized as a comics industry messiah. He is single-handedly saving the medium from what would otherwise be its rapidly decaying death throes.

DEBBIE WILLAS
Houston, Texas

LOBOTOMIZED TOAD ZAPS US AGAIN!

I see that Warren's greatest *Marvel* Comics fan has struck again in 1994 #13. The latest of Rich Margopoulos' *Marvel*-style rip-offs is "Cyberman!"

Obviously, the clown prince of unintelligible comics was trying to sell Warren a series with his "brand spanning new" character. And it looks like the editors, witless dolts that they are, were once again suckered in by the magnanimous mental mite of *Marvel*dom.

As is par, Margopoulos left his trademark all over the story. There was neither plot, character development, nor any rational reason whatsoever for the unfolding sequence of nonsensical events. There was, simply tasteless gore and purposeless action from beginning to end. Standard Margopoulos schlock!

I simply cannot understand why or how the stories of this lobotomized toad perpetually find themselves in print in such an otherwise excellent magazine.

JOANNIE PESCARA
Middleport, Ohio

READERS DON'T DIG DRACULA DIRT!

I have been laboring under the illusion that 1994 is an adult publication. Doesn't each and every cover of the magazine scream in lush day-glo colors that this is a periodical of provocative illustrated adult fantasy?

If that's true, then tell me, why does Warren Publishing persist in printing and reprinting ad infinitum childish ads for *Dracula* dirt necklaces and little *Star Wars* people in every 1994? These childish advertisements occupy the space that could have gone to either intelligent, well-programmed ads with adult product offerings or even better, more pages of comic art and story!

KAI DILLON
Roshia, Penn.

BABY MISSING

I missed the second installment of "Baby Makes Three" in 1994 #13. What gives? When you began the story in issue #12, I thought for sure it would be continued the following month.

CAURON JAFFE
Mission Viejo, Calif.

As you can see, Cauron, "Baby" continues this month. Conspicuously missing, however, is the long-running "Starfire Saga." We dislike featuring more than one continuing story per issue because the majority of readers seem to prefer stories which begin and end in one issue.

Womb with a view!

Would you mind going over that again, Doctor? I'm still not sure I understand how this machine is going to help our baby!

Certainly, Molly. In nontechnical terms, the machine increases an infant's capacity to learn by strengthening the synapses between the brain cells.

In the womb, the child, of course, has nothing to learn. But once out, it will pick up information with amazing speed.

You will have only to demonstrate something once, for the baby to absorb every iota of knowledge!

That sounds great! But I'm still a little worried that all this is only experimental.

You needn't worry, Paul. Your baby will be bright, healthy and normal in every respect!

Oh, Paul, I'm so happy! And it's such a beautiful day. Why don't we stroll home through the park!

You'd rather walk than teleport? Okay, honey, if you feel up to it.

Isn't it wonderful, Paul? I'm really looking forward to this baby.

Me too! But babies need a lot. I only hope we can afford—!

H-honey!? What's going on? Why is it suddenly getting so dark?

Dark? It's the sunniest day of the year! There's not a cloud in the sky! Paul... what's the matter with you?

M-Molly! W-where are you? What's happening to me?

I... I feel like I'm melting... g-grow-ing soft... limp!



M-Molly! The...
the world! So strange!
It... it's closing
in on me!

S-so warm
so moist...!
H-help me... Molly
mommy!

S-save
me...!
S-save—!

Sleep...
M-must...
sleep...

Whiskey?
B-but I
haven't—!

Paul! Paul! Have
you gone crazy?! What
are you doing?!

Huh?
Wha—?!

They can sneak
up on you, and knock
you on your ass if you're
not careful!

Mister, it looks
as if you've had one
too many whiskey
capsules!

Thank you,
officer. I'll
get him home!

What came over you,
Paul? You were ranting and
acting as if walls were
closing in on you!

Well, it's done
now. Let's get you
to bed early so you're
fresh for work
tomorrow.

Molly's sleeping
like a lamb! But I
can't stop thinking
about what happened
today!

It made no sense.
I... I felt almost like
an infant in a womb!

I... I can't
understand it!
I suddenly began
to hallucinate for
no apparent
reason!

Maybe I
whiffed some
of that experimental
gas at the hospital
by accident.

Hmmmm! What an
odd comparison! How
would I know what a
fetus feels like?
Unless...!



I wonder...!
Is the baby
attempting to
contact me... try-
ing to somehow
psychically make
me understand how
it feels?

Hey! Dad!
Is that you
out there?

Oh my God! It is
trying to speak to me!
It... it's telepathic!

I wish you
wouldn't refer
to me as it. Call
me Cranfranz! Yeah,
I like the name
Cranfranz!

C-Cranfranz-!?
I know! It was that
machine at the hospital!
Th-that contraption increased
your intelligence and
made you telepathic!

Don't get
so excited,
dad! You're
gonna wake
mom!

This... this is
fantastic! Say, what's
it like in there
... son?

Comfortable!
But awfully boring!
When I first began to
think, it frightened
me. It was like
suddenly waking up!

Not at first. When I
finally took hold of myself
and calmed down, I realized
what was going on!

Did you
know who and
where you
were?

You might
as well get in
on this, mom. I
might be need-
ing you.

M-M-mom!?
W-who said
that?!



That, darling, is
our son... Cranfranz!
He... er, picked the
name himself!

Neither parent slept for
the rest of the night.
The drowsy morning
hours were spent in
deep conversations
with their miraculous
unborn child. Then, as
dawn broke over the
horizon, they were con-
fronted with silence!

Do you suppose
he's sleeping, Paul? It... It's
all so incredible!

I don't think
whispering is going to do any
good, Molly. He reads our minds
... not our words!

We're going to
have to tell Dr. Zaro
about this, Paul! I know he's
not going to believe a
word of it!

I'm not sure I
do, either, honey. We'll
call the doctor when I get
back from work.

In the
meantime... don't
let the little guy
spook you!

I'll try
not to! But
you hurry home,
you hear?!

Paul entered the tele-
port booth, dialed the
coordinates for his of-
fice... and slowly faded
away... He material-
ized seconds later...
in the midst of a play-
mate pleasure spa!

What the-?
This isn't my
office!

Damn right
it isn't, you
peeping Tom!



I... I never did that before. I always dial the correct number! Always!

Ha! Ha! Ha! Ha!

Cranfranz! It was you! You caused me to dial the wrong number.

That's it, dad. Put her in the booth. Then dial 3X55Y1. It's a number which doesn't exist!

Now... short circuit the failsafe by connecting terminals C and L!

How do you know this, Cranfranz? I don't have the slightest knowledge of the mechanics of teleport booths.

The information is in your head, dad! You just didn't put it together before!

Ah, there she goes! Gone forever!

I just wanted to see if I could influence you... especially over long distances.

Don't... don't do that any more! It's... naughty, and... and—! Oh, god! W-what are you doing to me?

Oh, hello, Mr. Wells. I see they had you come in today, too! Don't you just hate working Saturdays?

P-please Cranfranz...! D-don't make me do this! It's wrong! Evil!

Cranfranz... please!

My boyfriend had a fit when I told him I had to finish those contracts. We were going to the interplanetary sex olympics!

Cranfranz... son! You mustn't do this! You just can't go around killing people! Now, I... I'll have to turn myself in to the authorities!

I'm afraid I can't let you do that, dad! You're going to get into the teleporter and dial mom's doctor!

Cranfranz! Please... I beg you!

Paul! How nice of you to drop in! I have some very good news for you!

Paul? Why are you looking at me that way? Oh, god... Noooo!

THOK!

You bastard! You little son of a bitch! You... you made me do it again!

Cranfranz!?

Do you hear me, Cranfranz?

God! He... he must be napping. I don't feel his presence anymore!

Wait! What's this? Z-ray photos! They... they're Molly's!

Good God! This is why Cranfranz had me kill the doctor! He was trying to keep me from learning...

... that he's a twin!

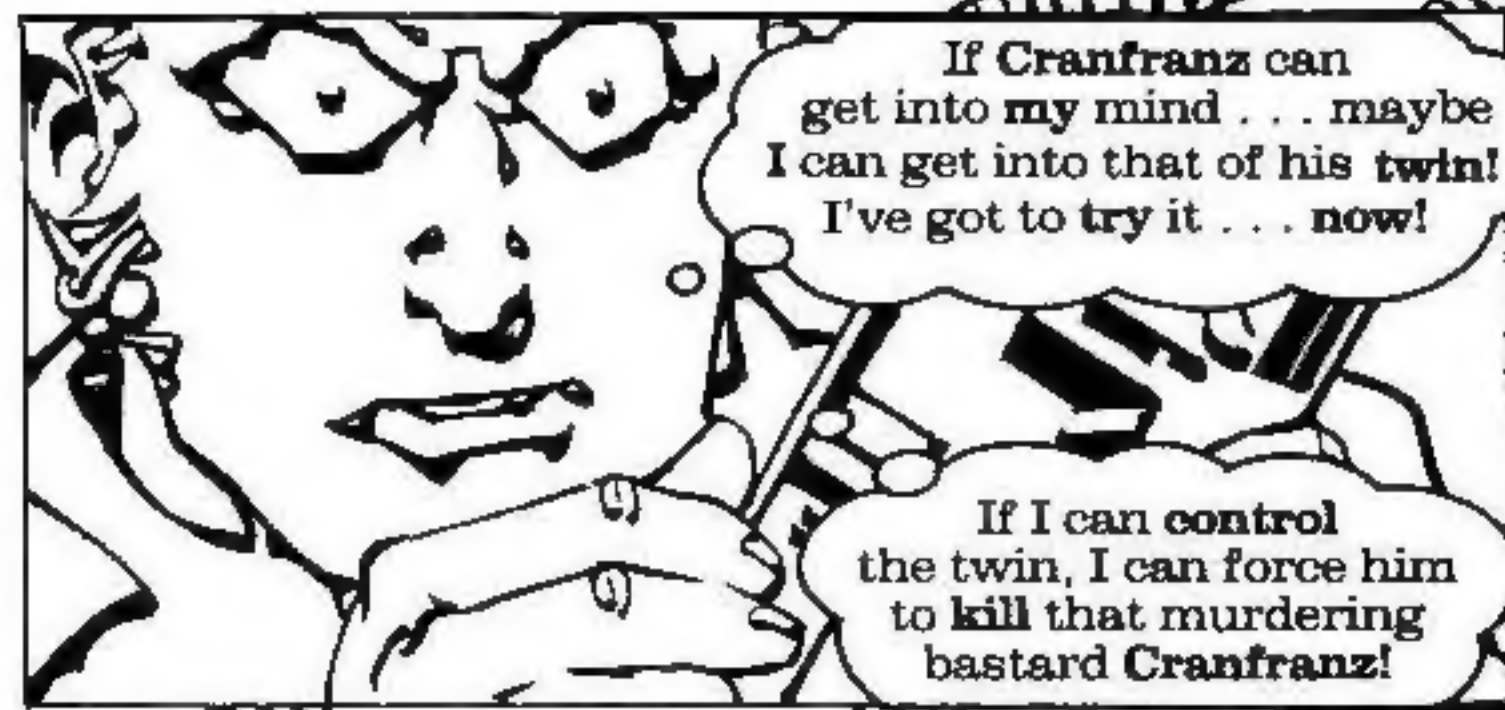
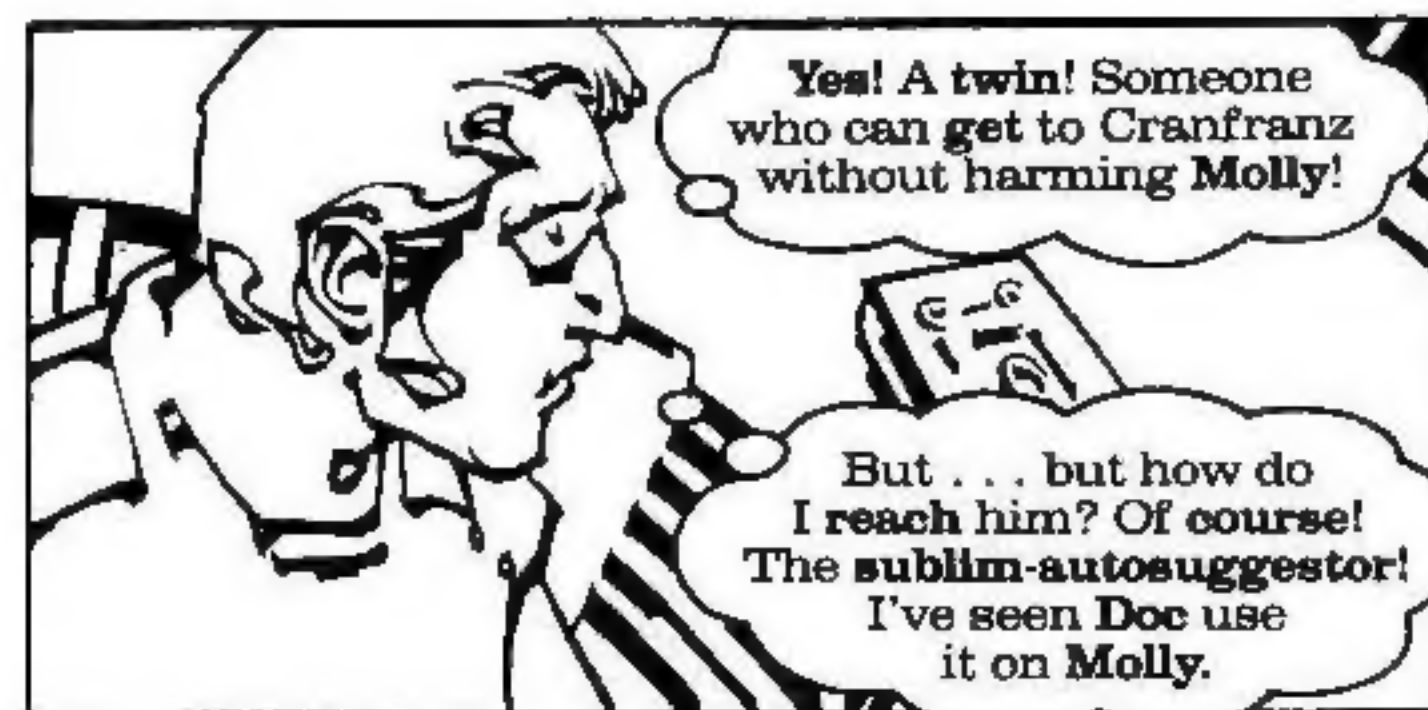
Just testing my control, dad! Don't worry about her. I have it all worked out.

Pick her up and do what I tell you to!

W-why... why?

Ungh!

Cranfranz! Nooooooo!



end

prologue

September, 2094. John Childress, Commander and Originator of The Benevolence Project, leads his highly intelligent passengers on his upcoming mission to deep space.



Thank you for coming.

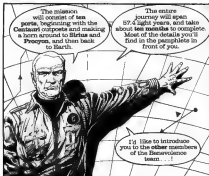
As most of you know, this is the eleventh annual flight of the Benevolence, and once again I will be in command of the mission.

August, 2005, eleven months later. The highest investigation of the Benevolence scandal continues.



Commander Childress?

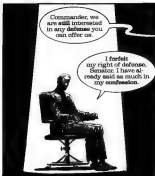
I can hear you, Senator.



The mission will consist of ten ports, beginning with the Centauri outposts and making a horn around to Sirius and Procyon, and then back to Earth.

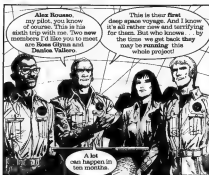
The entire journey will span 87.4 light years, and take about ten months to complete. Most of the details you'll find in the pamphlets in front of you.

I'd like to introduce you to the other members of the Benevolence team...



Commander, we are still interested in any defenses you can offer us.

I forfeit my right of defense, Senator. I have already said as much in my confession.



Alex Housso, my pilot, you know of course. This is his sixth trip with me. Two new members I'd like you to meet are Ross Glynis and Danilo Valiero.

This is their first deep space voyage. And I know it's all rather new and terrifying for them. But who knows... by the time we get back they may be running this whole project!

A lot can happen in ten months.



We understand that, Commander. But we are not ready to attach the blame for the death of twenty-four human beings until we have all the facts.

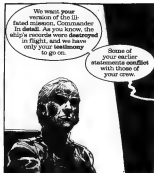
Won't you tell us all the facts, Commander?

What facts would you like, Senator?



Are there any questions? Yes?

Commander Childress, every year you ask for more millions for your **Remembrance Project**. You claim that you are the sole link to those distant colonies you visit, and that you deliver, as you put it, 'a piece of home to those far from home.'



We want your version of the ill-fated mission, Commander, in detail. As you know, the ship's records were destroyed in flight, and we have only your testimony to go on.

Some of your earlier statements conflict with those of your crew.



Isn't it true, Commander, that those colonists **renegades**, actually... would prefer to be left alone by Earth and its influences? Isn't that the reason most of those people fled the Earth to begin with?

What I'm asking, Commander, are those missions really **necessary**?



You mustn't pay any attention to what they say. They're a **loyal crew**. They'd manufacture any lie if they thought it would save me.

But it's not true. I acted alone. They had no part in it.



What's your name?

Leon Solvent, of **Stellarwide Press**.

To answer your question, Mr. Solvent... you bet your ass those missions are **necessary**.



On the contrary, Commander. That part of their testimony conforms **exactly** with yours. They say they had no part in the matter whatsoever!

Then, with your permission, Senator... I'll go on.

Twenty years ago, when the first tentative colonies were being established on Starway star systems, the colonists knew that they were cutting themselves off, possibly forever, from their friends and family on Earth. The distances were so great, the costs so high, that it was impossible to maintain any regular routes to these places. Thus, for many years, Earth heard very little from these far-flung colonies. And the colonies heard very little from Earth.

Into this dire vacuum came an out-dated, underfunded lumbering cargo vessel, which once a year delivered mail and limited cargo to this frontier. More important, it also brought friendly faces from home. That ship is mine. The *Benevolence*. For eleven years now, its crew has selflessly extended its good will and moral support to these courageous pioneers of space. And despite all that has been said about the colonists' desire to be left in peace, they appreciate our visits... *every one of them!*

The last, fearful voyage of the *Benevolence* began in September of last year. Our first nine ports were met with great enthusiasm and success. By the time we reached the final leg of the mission, James Numina, of the Procyon system, I was confident we would be enthusiastically welcomed even on this tragic place.

The account which follows is not an attempt to excuse my crime. There can be no defense for my action. But as you hear it, gentlemen, I beg you to confine your wrath to the individual, and not condemn an entire program because of the foolishness of a single man.



The BENEVOLENCE!

March 22, 2085. Our sixth month out. Ross, Darius, and I were shuttling to the surface of Janus-Numina, our final stop of the mission, when Alex, calling from the main ship, gave us a warning.

Developing heavy spot activity on Procyon. John, Alex says magnetic turbulence is increasing! It's hard to hear the rest of his message through the static.

I hear him on my set, Darius. It's not important. Shut him off.

Repeat: Probability you will have to cut short your planetside excursion if turbulence continues.

Shuttle, can you hear me? Can you hear—?

Oh, fuck it!

I did hear him, but couldn't be bothered with wan spots at this stage of the mission. Aboard the *Benevolence*, we carried twelve months of supplies for Janus-Numina... the only supplies it would get from any where! And I planned to make damn sure it got them.

**JANUS-NUMINA
BASE ONE/ESTABLISHED
2080 A.D.**

**OFF
LIMITS!**

This, then, was Janus-Numina Base One... five huge domes in abysmal disrepair, standing as a solemn testament to those hundreds of colonists who once settled here. And over the encampment hung a pall like ancient death, ever reminding of the unimaginable horror that destroyed them...

In the fifteen years since that tragic episode, only one ship has been allowed free access to Janus-Numina: my ship, the *Benevolence*. And every year since I began these missions, despite budget cutbacks, despite a swirl of controversy, we came to this tragic colony!



Then, the terrible stench I remembered too well assailed my senses, as the pathetic creatures emerged from the dome opening. Two dozen of the adult-size beings revealed themselves one after another, and edged our way awkwardly, scuffling toward us on withered limbs.

To look at them, it was impossible to say where the oozing flesh of their bodies ended and their clothing began, so fused together were the layers of purplish decay that covered them.

These were the lucky ones. The survivors of the Janus-Numina tragedy. Only God knew what He was thinking when He spared these people.



One of the creatures broke ahead of the others. I knew who it was instantly.

Skipper! How're you doing, my dear friend!

Mrs. Agatha niggghum...

Then a very unfortunate thing happened. In his excitement, Skipper moved around to greet Denton, who could not possibly have been prepared for his return.

N-No please don't don't!

Not "Robi" Keep away from me!

Wait! Skipper! Please...! The girl meant no harm!

Oh, goddamn it!

Get her on the shuttle. We're going back up to the ship.

Give me a minute, John. I'll go up with you.

Oh, "Robi"



Look on the仁慈ness, I think
will offend of some, finding that
she had singlehandedly ruined the
mission.

They're heroes! I
know all their names, and
I couldn't even look at them!
I tried. I really thought I could
do it! But they... they
were so repulsive!

Oh, Ross,
Alex. I'm so
ashamed. What have I
done? To John? To the
entire mission?

They repulse
me, too. Even now,
after fifteen years of
living among them.

You've
done nothing
to be ashamed
of, Miss
Valiero.

But please
try to remember
that, beneath those
monstrous husks, are
trapped twenty-three
highly intelligent
human beings.

These are
great men and
women, pioneers of
science, to whom we
owe an incalculable debt
of gratitude. And as
much as it hurts us, or
puts us out, we
must protect
them now.

"I know the horror they
went through. I was on
that original rescue
party that arrived too
late to help."

"Nothing could be done. We stood
by helplessly and watched scores
of the greatest minds of our time,
and their families, die in more
agony than I can think of."

I don't think it'll be
necessary for you to go back down
to the surface, Dennis. You stay aboard
the ship and rest. Alex and Ross can help
transport the supplies below.

Still
friends,
John?

It was
never other-
wise!

"That experience changed me! I decided then and there to stay
with these people for as long as they needed me. I can't tell you
how often I've wished I had never strapped myself with the job.
But there are times when nothing else means as much.

Mother of
Christ! What the
hell's happening?

Suddenly, total insanity burst loose. Chaos and catastrophe ruled the heavens.

Outside the ship the local sun Procyon, exploded suddenly, erupting one hundred times its normal brightness, sending rays so densely in all directions it was like being buffeted by solid matter.

As more explosions ripped across the ship, the *Benevolence* was thrown into convulsions, tearing itself apart! Several breathless seconds more went by before we realized what it was that had wrecked us.



Alex,
what
is it?

An immense solar
flare on Procyon. We're
caught in a major magnetic
storm! Explosions in mid and
mid-aft sections—damage to
cargo areas—damage
to engines—

Computer!
Report on engine
damage!

Radiation shields for
pods one through four have
disintegrated. Pod two: minor
fuel stabilizer leak. Pod three:
irreversibly contaminated and
approaching critical mass. Pod
four: minor temperature loss,
minor fuel leak, minor—



Wait, Wait!
Computer, run
across pod three
for me again!



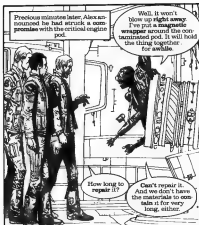
Engine Pod three irreversibly contaminated and
approaching critical mass limit. Estimate self-
destruction in twenty-three minutes. Expected
area of destruction: 18,790 miles diameter.
Temperature at explosion center estimated to
be—



Enough! Request immediate instructions for
repair of pod three!



No repair
procedures possible for
critical pod. Explosion
is imminent.



Precious minutes later, Alex announced he had struck a compromise with the critical engine pod.

Well, it won't blow up right away. I've put a magnetic wrapper around the contaminated pod. It will hold the thing together for awhile.

How long to repair it?

Can't repair it. And we don't have the materials to contain it for very long, either.



The budget committee made no allowance for extraneous safety equipment this trip, remember?

I remember.



Goddamn bureaucrats and their niggling budgets! Decide, did you radio for help?

Sorry, Commander. I can't get a message through this magnetic storm we're in.

I can't raise anybody.

Can't? Can't? Jesus Christ, will somebody tell me something we can do?



The pod is going to blow, John! There's nothing we can do about that. How long til it blows an hour, fifty hours... depends largely on how the sun acts.

As to what we can do I see only two choices.



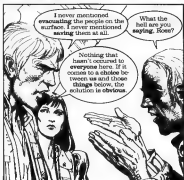
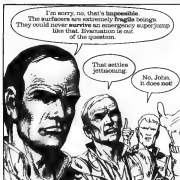
We can wait. We can send up a distress flare and pray for help that may never arrive.

But if the sun decides to flare up again in the meantime, the pod will explode in our laps.



"The other option... is to jettison the pod. But as soon as we do, the wrapper will dissolve and almost certainly blow us up before we could get away.

"In addition to which, an explosion of that magnitude would burn away the planet's atmosphere. Nothing on the surface would survive! All in all, not very promising."





Still, despite everything, the work continued. In the cargo hold, Alex and Simon checked the supplies to be shuttled below.







"Blanket transmission to our colonial neighbors. 29 June 2080. Our sixtieth day planetwide. Well, can you believe it? We've completed the first dome! And increased time! This means, of course, more beds and separate showers for our 288 men and women!"



But hell, you can't have everything! Some few pieces of machinery to install yet. For all events and purposes, though, Janus-Numina Base One is now a going concern. Mission accomplished, by god!"

"17 September 2080. The strange malady which appeared so suddenly shows no signs of letting up. Nature of the disease seems like a contest, but very rapidly causes gross deformities to the victim in the space of a few days."

"Half the base is now stricken. Our medical experts are working furiously to determine the cause of this dreadful sickness! But so far, no cause, no cure, no luck!"



"September 25th. Have determined... the cause of the disease. A quirky atmospheric virus... we neglected to check for... prior to landing. A whiff of scientists... and we missed it!"

"One hundred percent of the base now stricken! Death... impossible to tally. Everyone too sick... to do anything anymore..."

"Miserable God! It's killing us! Isn't there anyone out there who can help us?"



Help finally arrived! A Stellar Command ship making an observation flight of this sector. But by then it was too late! Of the original crew of 288, only twenty-three were saved... transformed into those hideous monsters below.

These days, of course, a routine inspection will prevent that infection. But the mission was devastated! It was decided, rather than return the twenty-three survivors to Earth, to let them end their lives on Janus-Numina, safe from curious eyes.

It was tragic! But the victims of Janus-Numina are no worse off than the victims of the Titan Explosion, or even the old leper colonies of Earth.

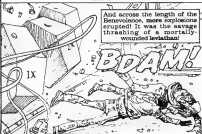
So I began to wonder how two men like John and Simon could become so obsessed with those creatures. And I think I found a connection.

Do you recall the creature called Skipper? That was Captain Thomas Westcott, leader of the Janus-Numina mission. Digging through these files, I discovered that John and Simon both served under a Captain Westcott in the Stellar Command.

They're old service buddies. Janus... comrades in arms! And that means we're in trouble!



Then, without warning, a huge secondary explosion shattered the cargo area, tossing the massive supply shells about like toy blocks.



Yet, this was not another solar flare! The ship was literally pulling itself apart around us.







While, without the ship, the superheated pod blazed brilliantly, like a miniature sun trapped inside the engine. And, as it grew brighter, the engine's breakdown became more rapid. It could not hold itself together much longer!



Hours later, in the cargo bay, massive robot arms secretly hoisted a single food shell into the waiting shuttle.



A voice from the monitor aroused me. It was Simon!

John, are you there?

Simon?!



I'm needed below, John. I've loaded only one of the food shells. But I'm certain I won't be needing any more. Just wanted to thank you for everything before I left.

No! Don't go! I need you here, Simon... to help me fight the others! I can't do it alone!



Give it up, John. It's a lost cause. There's only one alternative for you, and you'd be mad not to take it. Help isn't coming. You have to ditch the pod!



Just a little longer, Simon. We only have to hang on a little bit more!

Too late, John. That decision is being made as we speak.

Ross and Danica... they're on the bridge now, preparing to jettison the engine. By the time I reach the surface, the crisis will be solved.



Goodbye, old friend



An instant later, the shuttle was gone, nothing beyond the pitch-black surface.



Surely I must have gone mad then. A haze of rage and confusion drew over me, numbing any reason I had left! I ran, pistol drawn, for the bridge!

Ross and Darina meet three of their posse. (Hint: with machine guns.) Lend them away from the pond!



Just then, yet another explosion rip-poll through it nearby wall!



The explosion kills Ross and Darina. They both had some serious issues.





And then it happened! The pod exploded in a terrific ball of fire, rolling the planet with the heat of a nova sun! In a minute, perhaps two, the atmosphere of the entire planet would be burned completely away!



Mercifully, those on the surface hardly felt the fireball when it struck.

What is it? It's the next step in the evolutionary scale. It is homo-sapien becoming... something else! A race of star beings, perhaps... with no foundation, no anchor in the past, eyes turned only to the future.

Mahgor?



But in doing this, it has lost its most precious quality in the transition...

... something called humanity!



Milgr... oblaghh?

Come on, skipper, you're holding up the line.



Moments later, minus our pod, we broke into **super-space**, barreling like crazy. We were **safe**, at last, and on our way back to Earth!

None of the others were conscious to witness what I had done. It took the buffering of our **superjump** to bring them back to their senses.





I, of course, know that the computer would record my crime... which is why I destroyed my log before returning to Earth.

Computer, record the following. Code eleven, Priority A.



On 25 March 2085, John Childress, Commander, has placed crewmembers Rousseau, Vulero and Olynn on functional arrest. Upon return to Earth base they will be turned over to Stellar Command for trial. The charge is multiple homicide.

All on board records for the past sixty hours are considered evidence, and are to be looked into the computer banks accessible only to me. End of record.



There will certainly be harsh imprisonment for this. But you can see there is nothing else to do.

Somebody must be held accountable for this crime.



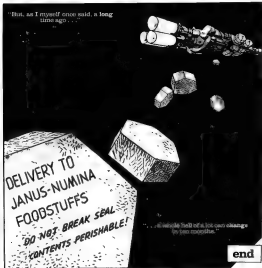
Maybe you'll turn us in. And maybe you won't.

But it's a long way home, John. And as you said at the press briefing before we left—



I panicked! I wanted to live and felt there was no alternative considering the circumstances.

I didn't plan it this way. God knows it certainly isn't what I set out to accomplish when we left Earth those months ago.



"But, as I myself once said, a long time ago..."

DELIVERY TO
JANUS-NUMINA
FOOBSTUFFS
DO NOT BREAK SEAL
CONTENTS PERISHABLE!

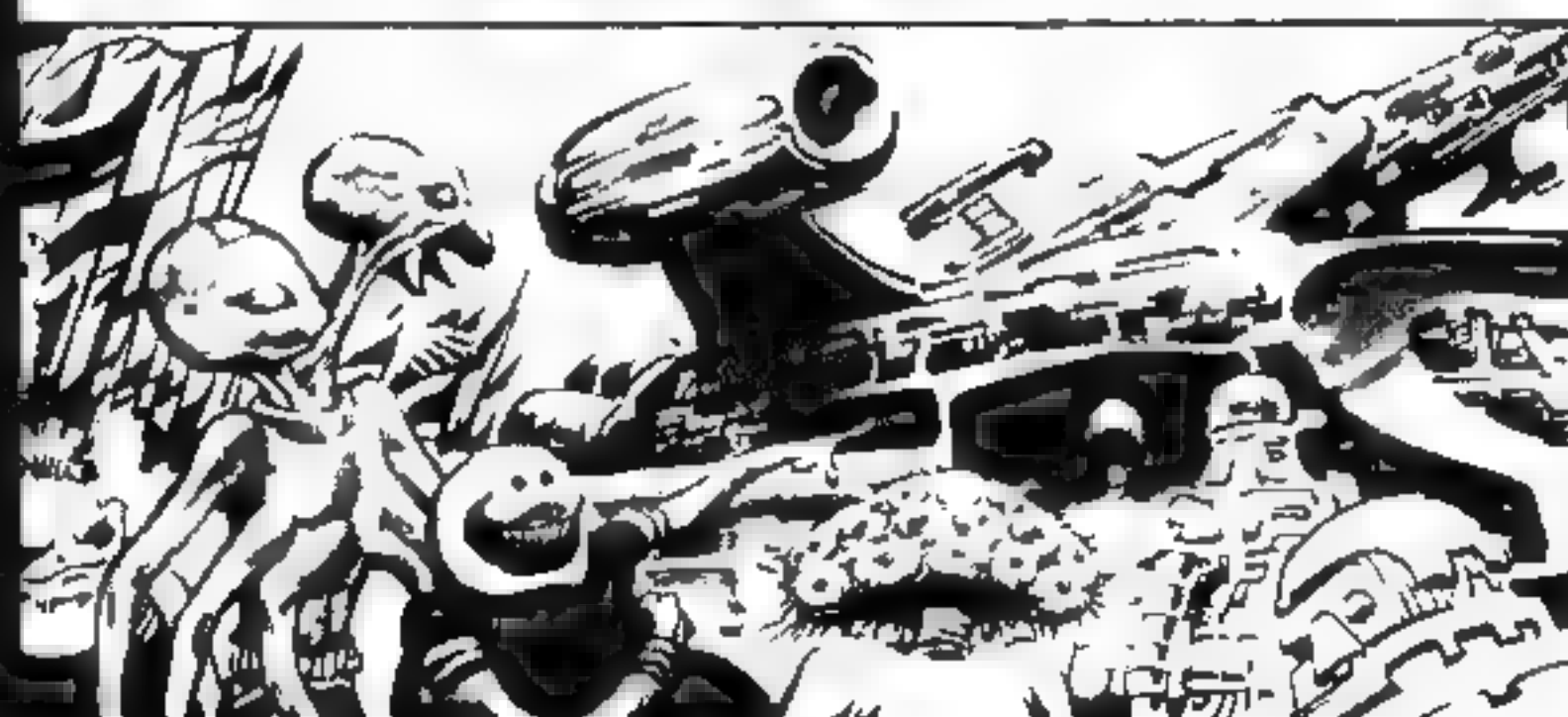
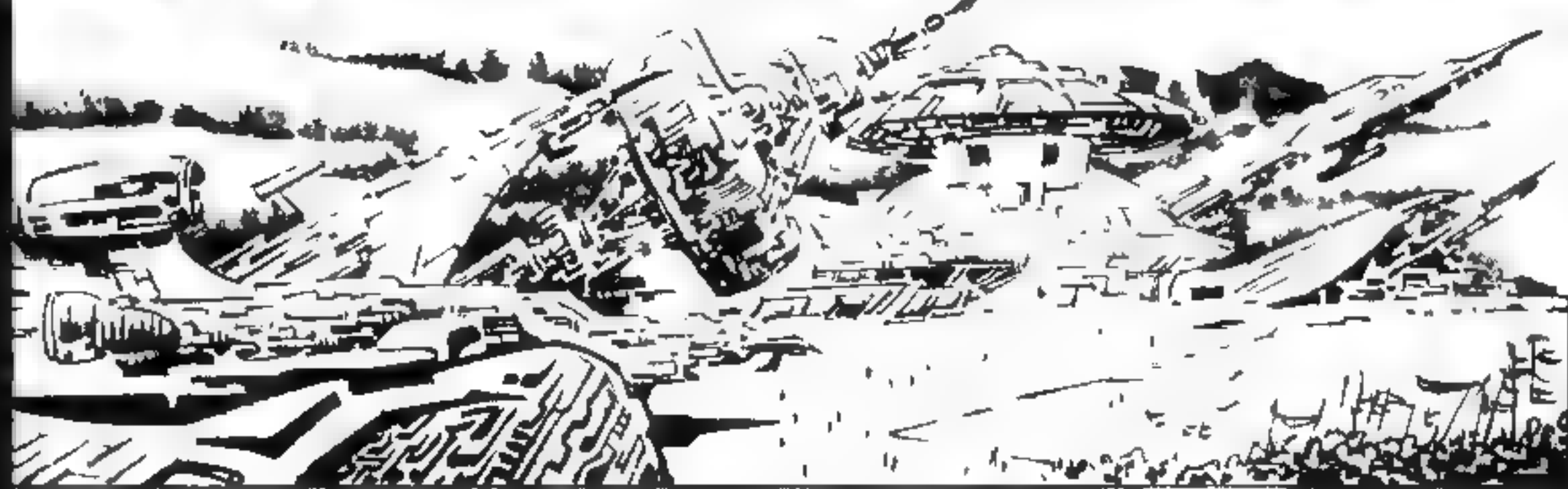
"...a vehicle full of a lot can change in ten months."

end



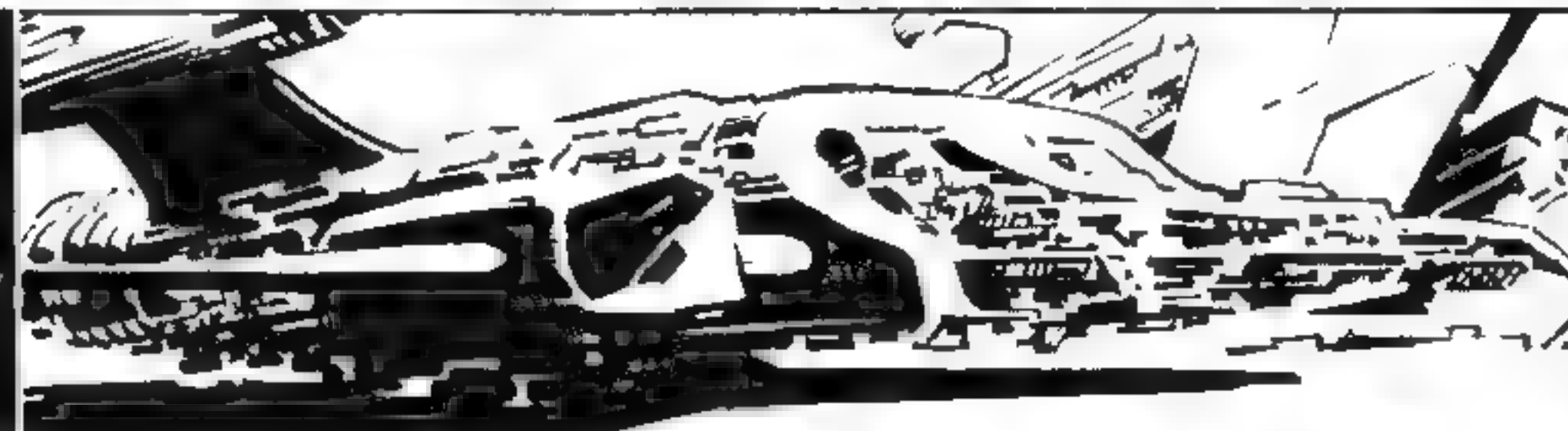
It happens every 2.3
Terran years.

The most advanced commercial, private and military starcraft of one hundred and four stellar systems comes to this proving ground representing the widest variety of interests from unstable governments hoping to restore national pride, to bellicose empires scheming to win popular support to just plain individuals, interested solely in the prize money! They all come here!



Pilots!
Activate your
drive gener-
ators!

Twelve dozen
starcraft,
from as
many far-
flung regions
of the Galaxy,
come suddenly
alive on the
starting
line.



... powered
by plasma
converters,
ion rockets,
nuclear
thrusters,
and queer
drives of un-
fathomable
alien design.



All
ships report
readiness,
sir!

Stand by
to give the
signal, then!



Atop the
starting
tower, a
small nuclear
flare is
ignited ...



... and all at once, they launch
in thunderous unison! Ships
from Vega, from Sirius, from
Zorn, from Sol! They rise swiftly
into outer space.



... to begin the fiercest
battle in all the known
universe!



"THE GALAXY GRAND PRIX"

The ships are barely out of the starting gate when the first casualty occurs.



A Manta warship from Sirius sees the path of a Procyon Ram Scoop, badly underestimating the enormous speed of the Scoop.

BA-WOOOM!

And in this race, nobody makes a bad estimate twice.

Three ships approach Chimera B-IV, first pylon of the race, almost simultaneously.

In the lead is a Spacehog (no stellar affiliation listed), followed by a mammoth Conqueror-type starship from Betelgeuse, with the popular entrant from Sol taking up the rear in a Bendersnatch.



On the planet, the first of the mandatory obstacles of the race looms ahead! The Labyrinth of Thorns!



It's thorns are explosive, and only skilful, evasive flying can avoid disaster. But the Spacehog feels the hot breath of the others gaining on him, and blunders headlong into the maze.



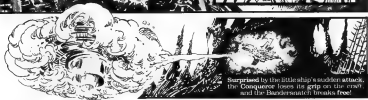
BDAM!

It's a painful lesson... blundered too late!

And ahead the Sol ship, the Bendersnatch!

Spacehog is down, kids! Heads up! We're next!

Wait a minute! Controls not responding! What the-?



Godstrom pulls back the throttle, easing the ion accelerator into the superlight range. Planets and stars move by quickly! But there is still a very long way to go, and many more obstacles to overcome.

Below, a Zorn pitstop crew works furiously to refuel two of its entrants!



Minutes later, the two ships are aloft, but in pursuit of Amos Godstrom! But these ships... a Vegan P10, followed by an L-14 Spacebreaker from Cusiopeia... do not mean to beat Godstrom, but to intercept him.

For these vessels, and the systems they represent, are but puppets of the Vast Sprawling Zorn Empire, which more than anything wants to win the Grand Prix. And every year they are cheated of this by Amos Godstrom and his Raudersmatch!



Amos, for god's sake, give this up! This race means nothing to you!

Join us! The Zorn Empire will pay you one hundred times the purse if you'll just lose this one!



Sorry, darling. It's not that I'm interested in politics or give a good goddamn if the Zorn Empire wins a big propaganda victory with the Prix or not...

It's just I couldn't sleep nights if I let a couple of leaky tugboats like yours beat my Raudersmatch!

Godstrom cuts the radio link, and sits up close to the controls. Outnumbered, out-gunned, he prepares for the grim bout to follow.





Ahead, just beyond a small nebula cloud, is a great blue giant. Godatron veers directly for it.



Then... momentarily... the ship is lost in the blaze of the giant sun. The Bandersnatch is gone!

When finally the ship emerges, the Zorn starfighters are right behind it... closer than ever!



A sudden burst of speed puts the Zorn fighters into killing range!



But as the Zorn ships level their lasers at the Bandersnatch, it vanishes from sight!

And the Zorn pursuers, unable to stop in time, run into each other's lasers, blasting themselves into atomic smithereens!

BADOOOM!

Ames Godatron emerges from the black nebula cloud where he was hiding in time to witness the cataclysm. From the furrowed brows, he gathers, the holographic image he created of the Bandersnatch, was very effective!



Godatron isn't two minutes away from the scene when, suddenly, something else comes barreling his way. This time from straight ahead.





It's a comet!
A big one!
And it
shouldn't be
here!

But then
Godstrom
remembers it
is he who is
considerably
off-course.


And coming up from behind . . .



An Orion
Morguefiller! Right
on our ass! We're
caught between him
and the comet!



Previous fractions of seconds race by as Godstrom agonizes with indecision. And all the while, the Orion Morguefiller speeds closer.



Then, in apparent desperation, Godstrom opens his solar wind chutes, bringing the Bandersnatch to an abrupt halt!



And at the
last
possible
second,
Godstrom
releases his
chutes, and
hits the
ship's
underjets...!



The old
sucker play,
for sure . . .
But anything
that works is
as good as
new!

And nobody
said the
Orions were
mental
giants, after
all . . .



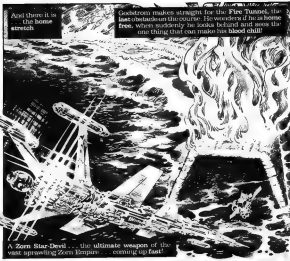
WHOOOM!

But is it desperation?

The chutes billow in the minute stellar breeze, obscuring the sight of the onrushing comet from the speeding Orion death ship.



The finish line is close now. Time to get a wiggle on!



And there it is... the home stretch.

Godstream makes straight for the Fire Tunnel, the last obstacle on the course. He wonders if he is home free, when suddenly he looks behind and sees the one thing that can make his blood chill!

A Zorn Star-Devil... the ultimate weapon of the vast sprawling Zorn Empire... coming up fast!



The Star-Devil is bigger, faster, more maneuverable, and has ten times the firepower. Godstream hadn't even had to deal with a Star-Devil before. And he certainly wasn't looking forward to it now!



The Star-Devil roars into the tunnel above Godstream, who strains to keep his ship controlled.



He's keeping me close to the water! Gotta put down the pontoons!



The pontoons stop the ship from swamping, but still the Star-Devil crowds him!



Lighten up, goddamn it! Lighten up!





At long last, Godstrom sees it! The finish line! After six previous straight wins, he should be used to the sight by now... even tired of it. But each time is more glorious than the last!



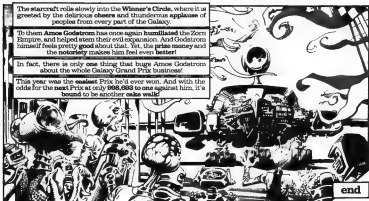
Did we do it? Are we over a million yet? Quick! Somebody get me the odds for the next Prix!

Coming up, Amos!



Twenty-seven light years from where it first launched, the Handersnatch returns to a well-deserved landing...

SCREEECH!



The starcraft rolls slowly into the Winner's Circle, where it is greeted by the delirious cheers and thunderous applause of peoples from every part of the Galaxy.

To them Amos Godstrom has once again humiliated the Zorn Empire, and helped stem their evil expansion. And Godstrom himself feels pretty good about that. Yet, the prize money and the notoriety makes him feel even better!

In fact, there is only one thing that bugs Amos Godstrom about the whole Galaxy Grand Prix business!

This year was the *easiest* Prix he'd ever won. And with the odds for the next Prix at only 999,999 to one against him, it's bound to be another easy walk!

end

WORLD FAMOUS SPACESHIPS

MODEL KITS

SPACESHIPS WITH DISPLAY BASES & DECALS

1st LUNAR LANDING

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#2402698.50



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#24035/\$7.95

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CYLON RAIDERS AND COLONIAL VIPERS

They're Out of this World
Easy to Assemble

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COLONIAL VIPER

Viper Sting Ship from the Colonial Fleet of the Battlestar Galactica. This easy to assemble model kit comes with display base, decals, complex stabilizers, a control center, rocket jet ports, working missile launchers and is 1 1/2" long! John Dykstra, the special effects wizard of Star Wars, has struck again with this beautifully detailed death dealing dreadnought! Steak, heat, power! and packed with all the destructive weapons that super science can think of, the Viper Sting ship is the last hope of humanity as the Cylonists flee the destruction of their home planets and the dreaded Cylonist Create your own action packed adventures with these models! PARENTAL SUPERVISION REQUIRED #24209/\$4.50

GHITA

OF ALIZART

BY FRANK THORNE

Thence the wizard, using the magical gem of the goddess, Tammuz, has achieved control of the magnificent ancient creature Drill. The giant prehistoric beast is to be the juggernaut of Ghita's small army of half-breeds. The plan to attack Alizart is set. Ghita rides alone toward Alizart. Her army, under the leadership of Thamef and Dabala, will begin the assault at high sun, day two after her departure from the mountain home of the so-called half-breeds. The battle to rid Alizart of the Trollian army will start, with or without the success of Ghita's plan to personally kill Neergod, the usurper of Rhalla's throne!

Four moons have passed since the prayers of Tammuz have been heard in the temples of Alizart! Long, dark, the clouds of terror to Neergod, the Troll god, have echoed over ruined altars. The Trollian emperor watches from the royal palace as stranded survivors of the Trollian siege work at rebuilding the city. Beasts run on the tower. Neergod's astrologer nervously ponders the day.



The stars speak of evil times

Pestilence? Famine?

War?

I am aware of the ambitions of the blonde harlot and her pack of subterfuge

If they attack, we will kill them all - even the wench!

She might answer me - for awhile!

A wet shroud of darkness lowers on the depths of the purple forest of Azna. Brilliant fingers of light ring pummed the drenched woodland. The fury thunderbolts charge the air with luminous ozone. Ghita's nostrils flare as she passes through the silvery mist. A final bolt strikes nearby. The woman's startled horse rears as she raises her dirk toward the vaporous black bowl above her.



I, Khan-Dragon, curse the lightning!



Dung! Dung! Dung!
Khan-Dragon, you pukepig!
Again you use my voice as well as my body!

Is there anything left of Ghita?



Khan-Dragon!
You've split me with a saber the likes of which I've never felt... and I've felt many!

A prick's a prick to a hussey. They come and go but yours!

What did you do to me in the frugging tombs of Allamir?



You've seized my body and mind! You use me in mad schemes! You've made me more than half a barbarian warrior!

Frig you! Frig you! Frig you, Khan-Dragon! I still be Ghita... not a freak who struts about like the naked soldiers of Murgu!



I will be a woman!

Mother!

Mother? Again the pale woman shifts from the shadows beneath a moss-covered overhang. Glina continues to protect the frail figure of a young girl.



Child... are you alone here in the forest?

Why do you call me mother?

I would be your wend for tonight. I will not be here by morning's glow.



I, too, come from Alassar! I, as you, will never bear a child.

... for I am dying, because my city is dying!

What are you...? The ghost of my unborn child...? Or a demon in league with Nargon?



Destiny has denied you motherhood. That can not be altered.

But fate has not stripped you of your womanhood!

Heartless of dung! What are you talking about?



At present, you are a tool for the will of a goddess!

Godsdamn! I've had my goddall of playing at divinity! As for your talk of the gods.



... stick it up your bum... whatever you are!

I should have kicked you at first for calling me mother!



Forgive her, oh Tharmak, for not recognizing you. Glina is surely less than heavenly, but more a woman than many a goddess.

Gluta finds refuge for the night in a shallow cave near the southern fringes of the forest. Sleep is difficult on the cold floor. The woman wrestles with a nightmare—a foreboding dream of slaying evil and humiliation! Now, as dawn approaches the golden domes of Almayr, Gluta knows that the dark dream played out in her fatal sleep is crouching within the high walls of the city.

Farewell, good blade
To win an audience with
Neegon I'll have to depend
on my wits alone



The north portal road bears witness to the savagery of the Troll army's invasion of golden Almayr.

Bones! Human skeletons of the slaughter torn!

If there be a Heaven and
Dannur be real—pray have them in glory



As Gluta approaches the gate, a notorious band of armed Trobels guards charge toward her.

Kale! Kale!

Vin-
et!

Can any of you sadpoles understand human speech?

I would see Neegon! I have an important message!



Oa bid
to bun
kale!

Zh ar
na bun!

Neakak!



Thank!



Like ravenous owls pouncing on a moaning mouse, the lizard guards paw at the struggling woman's body.



Nergon! Nier-gon!
You bumholes! I will
see... crush! Nergon!
I have a message!

The snarling guards obediently release the putrid-looking woman.

You would be Ghita!
We have been expecting
you. But where is your
grubby pack of
subtrolls?

I'm sure they'll
soon be pecking at our
walls with their
crude weapons.



Ghita's contrary reaction the grumpy ears of a Trollish of fier who speaks the language of humankind.



Koon ter lo
da sib, da na
na brail
koon!

Thus, the worm comes from Ghita makes her angrier as an
try into Alms!

As a general you
make a fine courtier!
It is folly to think a
halfroll can be
trained to fight!

They are but
scum with traces
of human blood in
their veins!



The lieutenant *tekes* has bidden into the royal palace. The ravaged halls of Ghita's former glory have wept, and
mourned, and ached for her return.

Your talents are
wasted playing the role
of a commander!

Your paps and notch
are suited for a
sovereign's pleasure.

but not for a Trollish
sovereign. Nergon is vowed to
abstain from lust and desire.



Neergon! Look upon the article of your doom. True, you are powerful, not to have a female! But here is temptation played on a scale above the passions of men, to even a repulsive girl!

This bare-bottomed wench appeared at the north gate.

She was the paramour of King Khalis.

Ah! Ghita... the high priestess of subtlety! The female possessed of the spirit of a warrior!

Behold! She is a clown! A buffoon...

...wearing bits of armor stolen from the tombs of the dead heroes of Alizar!

Indeed you are a woman! Behold, Kizao... the breasts that enthralled an emperor!

They are yours, Neergon, what belonged to Khalis is now yours!

Which the spider and which the fly? Neergon thinks he is master of the web! But Ghita's plan is made of stronger stuff. She will lead the dagger on and seize the moment and come!

She wishes to speak with you, my liege

Thou, Draz, all attendants leave!

Kizao say!

I will hear what the woman has to say.

With the room empty of functionaries, the final stage is set. The curtain still aspires, but it is Neergon who plays the fool magnificently.

Secure her arms, Kizao.

Speak, harlot! Do you seek asylum? I warn you, there are no longer any brothers in Alizar.

First I am a woman. Call me buffoon, wench or clown, but I am—a woman!

Khalis was a fool! But he had excellent taste!

I should imagine this craft is as savory as a thrush muffin!

Do with it as you wish, holy one.

Even as Nergon ponders Ghita's endowments, Thonet, Dahib and the column of halfbreed plod southwest in the shadow of Drill, the mighty juggernaut of the caves.



A mounted Trollish goblin spurs the oncoming apparition and races toward Alzari with war rump.

Nergon ends the fancy. He pulls Ghita's mop of golden hair with savage suddenness!



Klana! Witness the true-
whore! She is not a
woman, for that suggests
some measure of
self-esteem!

The creature
would trade her
body for a throne
or a simple
drinks!



Drag her to the carrion pits! Slay
her! Let the dogs of Alzari feast on the
flesh of the goddess of subtrolls!



First let me display her
to my subjects! They must see
the vulnerable neck, the
pregnable privy mound and the
weak, effeminate arms of

a "mighty
warrior!"



the would-be
conqueror of Alzari!



It is now high noon! On
schedule for the siege. If
Thammar be the advocate of
this mad venture, may she
keep Ghita from harm

Waaaa! I spy the high
dome of the great temple
of Thammar.

As Nerog's retinue, Troops from all of Akuma begin to gather in the spacious courtyard before the palace. The emperor waits in stony silence as the men become jammed with his deadly followers. Ghita stands and smiles as Nerog begins his vicious tirade of mockery and insult! The ugly warrior responds with guttural cracks and hoars. At the height of the oration the Troops pick up and elbow his way through the most a path to the throne.



Flame of Nerog? They come! It comes! An army and a thing! A... giant thing from the north!



Come, see in lord It is true! Troops and whatever it is.



... It is the size of a mountain!

Ghita quickly seizes the bulky disc and draws the sword from Kuma's chest!



It moves as fast as the flame of subterfuge!

It cannot be a living thing! There is nothing so big as that on Earth!



Aye!

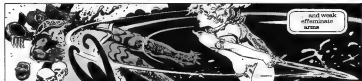
Yet, it seems to throb with life!



The bitch!
Korra na ga
kun ab naevni!
Vah!

Naz
Isai!

Nergon/
Obsure
the vulnerable
tanta...



and weak
effeminate
NZZZ



... of a mighty
warrior-woman!



Now, load
trigger...



... do as I command or I'll
reap your leathery bums
with this blade!



Tell your scaly mob that the
giant behemoth bearing down
on Alzarr is... the goddess
Tannus come to
reclaim her city!

Order your
troops to
surrender to
Obata's
invincible army!

Tell them
a woman
now rules
Alzarr!

Painting depicts the wildfire! It is now
later in the "Dorian" era's needs to be
heard!

Hot Bee, lizard
king? My juggernaut's
visit has shattered your
troll-swarm like ants in
a jolted ant hill.



Still in galaxy, guard is to his to rescue his son's leg. After a period of triumph
tasting the "crash" of the tower's door. Ghita is now
too busy distracted by the splintering door.



The steep rate of the crash is too slowly to grasp from warm

Son of a
troll hell.



... taste the
wrath of Khan-
Dagon.



This blade
is a hard,
cold
penis.

It is the blooded
cock of Khan-Dagon! The
great penis of
annihilation!



His prize
victim is
Ghita! I faded
as Khan-Dagon
thrust his
living cock
into me!

Khan-Dagon:
died by my hand,
yet, he lives in me!
His penis is now
a shaft
of Desolation
steel!



His blade is
my lover ...
and plunderer
of my identity as
a female!

The sword
revealed me
with many
thrusts.
In ... out,
in ... out!



Your death
will take but
two strokes!



With a savage scream, **awing** Ghira **beheads** the monarch! So much for **despots** in priestly garb. Farewell, Nergal, Adieu, Nergal, god of Tyrol! Your pontiff is minus his head and any would-be successors are fleeing back to Zephyran! Soon your streets will tumble as victorious halftrolls and liberated humans smash your ruins into the dusty streets of Alizar. No more for reptilian gods!



The magical gem shines like a miniature sun in Thon's upfold hand as he directs mighty Drill toward the wastes of Alizar. Dabbi urges Ghira's troops forward! The army of halftrolls will meet little resistance once they charge through the toppled wall of the city. They will celebrate **more** than a victory over their monsters. The **conquering** halftrolls will have won a **homeland**!



The petrified monster trundles through the night toward the wastes.



Thorn! flee them, Nergon? I am not ashamed to weep in victory!

Were I a man, I could not cry!





Thrice the only remaining police officer, shapes through the splintered door



Ascheta **parties** like a wild thrush, the pagan crowd **glows** toward the mass square of Alcazar. **Thamul**, exuding the power of the god, orders the **murder** to **halt!** The streets are alive with the valiant troops of Uthman's army. The **Islamic** forces, in **disarray**, are no match for the **vengeful** sagacity of **half-trolls**.



No **gripes** or **sovereign** head is easily **booted** out of its **throne**.

Cham is **ripped** of a **second** stroke and **struck** back at the **bulldog**, **hurl** with a **powerful** **kick**.



She follows **throng**, **low** and **fatal** **thrust** into **Uthman's** **fat** **belly**.



Two **raging** on **rigid** **land** or **skull** **crania** **joined** by **fatal** **skirmish**.



Let sweet victory be a song and its singers joined! The streets of Altzari are empty of living Trods but paved with the corpses of the lizardmen of Zephyran. Such is the bloody consequence of a woman's towering rage! Ghita marches through the thickets of Trodish dead like a tigress after a kill.

Holy one! We have
crushed the rodential
They lie as dead as
rod dung in a stump!

Dahidi! Negron be
without the head! I
hacked it loose with this
Trodlash blade!

Now where in Thene?
The old weaver of spells
had the cave thing rolling
like a regiment of
thunderstorms!

I owe
him a
kiss!

Wiley Tammos! Welcome back to Altzarr! Do you dwell in blood, Ghita? Or perhaps the wizard? Even the form of the hellish monster of the caves may be your host. Your spirit effects many shapes to achieve its ends. No doubt the primary pawns in your scheme is the woman called Ghita! Alas, she will forever be innocent of the honor. She is gloriously free of the ability to understand such celestial intrigue!

Thene!

Pipkin!



At Ghita's request, Thonet had carried the sword of Khan Dagon from the Azizian caves. With little ceremony the wizard restores the blade to the blond woman. In the rising light of Alazar's first day of life again, Ghita descends into the royal tombs beneath the gallery. She seeks the remains of Khan Dagon!



Ghita appraise how the mummified carcasses of the warrior-general of Alazar!





Godheme!

Lead! Your troops await you in the main square



Here be the good! I'll see to it that our juggernaut looms back to his nest in the mountains!

Then you might wear it in your crown.

Order three crowns be made, for we will rule Alizar together!



I am but a dung carrier, my goddess. I cannot presume to be a king!

None of us are what we were, Dabub

Even Thamef mastered true magic in the caves of Azza.



We shall all three be sovereigns of Alizar

And we shall rule wisely and well, till we are cozy and not with boredom!



Then we shall give the throne to the wisest man, the most beautiful woman and the noblest halfbreed in the kingdom.

... and be off to hunt the unicorn, stalk the leviathan, guzzle an ocean of ginseng and tumbump on the shores of Niraxzu!

baby makes three!

Pioneer 10 was the first interstellar probe, hurled out of the solar system at a whopping ten kilometers per second. With luck, it might have reached our nearest celestial neighbor in a few hundred thousand years.

Instead, it made a complete U-turn and turned its way back home at several hundred thousand clicks a second!

But spacecraft don't just make U-turns in a void . . . or pick up momentum from a vacuum. Especially momentum that's faster than light speed!

Something was out there! Something big! Something humorously referred to as . . . "Baby!"

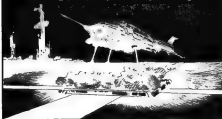
Looky here, boy!
You're on in this space station
an't the coolest ones out here!
We're both in orbit around some-
thing with 'bout 8.3 Earth
masses!

All that was well and fine. Until a few months ago! That's when two UNICORN* agents mysteriously died and a third was reported missing out there in the vicinity of Baby! This left Baby on its own, and it left UNICORN chief Lamont Cranston thoroughly pissed! Pissed enough to send me into never-never land on his fastest ship. And so, after three weeks of high acceleration, my Pilot, Kelly, and I were there...at the edge of the known solar system, ready to dock on what one might jokingly refer to as the most far-out space station in the system!

That thing,
Kelly, is why we're
here! It's called
Baby!

*The United Nations Interplanet. Criminal Observation Research and Notification Bureau.

Kelly raised a finger in exclamation. But I guess he couldn't think of an appropriate response. Instead, he concentrated on the helm and brought us in for a perfect three-point landing!



Soon's we touch down, I'm gonna kill me one dumb shit Port Master!



You're not still angry because they fired on us?



Angry? Me? Shoot, son... I'm pissin' green, I'm so pissed!

After three weeks of suffering gravities that changed every time the thruster did, I didn't give a shit who Kelly was about to kill!



So you're Port Master, eh? I just want to know one thing, handsome...

... why the fuck did you fire on my ship?

Then again, I figured that somebody had to set the poor, hot-tempered beanpole straight!

Kelly. Maybe I can explain!



I know there's an explanation, boy! You just gotta let these ground jockeys know they can't get away with shit like that!

Well I'll bet Looky there, boy!

Standing in the air lock was what could have passed for a zero-goo blimp... Charlie Chulmann, Director of the science station!

If you would please stop mauling my Port Master, maybe I can explain things to your satisfaction, sir!

From what I'd learned from the reports I'd digested in the past weeks, Chulmann was the closest thing the scientists had to a mayor!

You see, most of the ships that service this port do not arrive in conventional craft like yours! The standard ship is a sunsail, and might take two years to get this far outsystem!

So, to cut that time, we let them build up sunlight speed all the way out and use our lasers to brake them to a halt!

You mean you was just tryin' to brake my ship, not break it?

Please accept my apologies and allow me to make it up to you! I'll show you around!

Hehehehehe! Chulmann giving Kelly a guided tour? I smiled for the first time since leaving Luna! It couldn't've happened to a better guy!

I think I'll skip the tour! Where's your Communications Room?

Level Four, sir. At the end of the corridor!

My first consideration was reporting in to Cranston...the madman who sent me on this goose chase! Course, this far out, it'd take a good twenty-four hours for any message to get back to him! And that was twenty-four hours as the photon flies!



Turner? Yeah!
We've been expecting you! There's a tape from UNICORN Central. Top Priority!

Great! Let's see what radio to task the old man's dreamed up for me now!



Good morning, Turner. I hate to say this, but I'm not sorry this assignment fell to you! You're out on the thin edge by now, and I think you're one of the few we've got who can take the strain!

Personally, I wanted Wetherby, you understand! But trip time from Titan was in months. So, one way or another you'll have to do!

The basics you know! We've got three agents missing out there!

There's not much to go on, but one of our men mentioned a threat from one of the scientists before he vanished!



What we want is to apprehend the guilty party without disrupting the scientific community on board the space station!

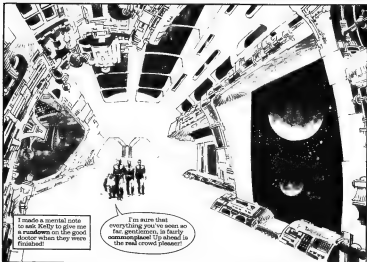
Then again, if they're all involved, you just might find yourself in some deep shit, boy! Before they let you, try to get me a breakdown of their organization!

Thanks, Cranston! That's what I needed to hear! While I'm chomping in the open air lock, I'll ask them to call my office and transmit a copy of their chain of command!





I filed a brief counter-report (amazing how articulate one can be employing four letter words alone...), and made my way out of the Communications Room to catch up with the tour group.





Chelmann led us into a huge, circular room with a transparent, glass-bottom floor. Struck in the middle of everything was a mammoth, swirling hole!

How 'bout that! A room with a view!

This is nothing, sir! Wait until you see what I have over here!

The good doctor pulled a small, black ball from the nearest cabinet, with the aid of a grapping device that never even touched the sphere!

You see, my friend? A perfect black hole!

Good god! You're gonna kill us all!

It's just a model! Beer?

Kelly was willing to risk a brief look at the thing, but only while using the party doctor as a shield!

So that's what they look like!

Pure speculation, of course! No one's ever actually seen one! It's matter so dense . . . so compressed, it has a volume of zero! An infinite density node!

Sounds thrilling! It can't blow up, can it?

Blow up? Hahaha! Not in 1.5 trillion years!

To be continued!



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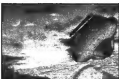
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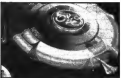


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